Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

Video Conference, 9-13 November 2020

Contents

I. First Plenary Session, 9 November – Opening Actions 3
A. Welcome and Opening Prayer 3
B. Opening Actions 3
II. Remarks by the Moderator 4
III. Report of the Interim General Secretary 4
IV. Overview of matters for decision 8
V. Presentation on current financial situation 9
A. Overall financial situation 9
B. Funds and Reserves 10
C. Green Village 12
VI. First Session on Public Issues 13
A. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict 14
B. Elections in the United States of America 15
C. Crisis in Ethiopia 16
VII. First Plenary Session – Closing remarks 16
VIII. Second Session on Public Issues 16
IX. Third Session on Public Issues 17
X. Decision Session 18
A. Report of the Personnel, Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee 18
1. Moderator's Remarks and Report of the Interim General Secretary 18
2. Report of the Remote Rules Review Group 19
3. Scenarios for Convening the Central Committee, June 2021 19
4. Membership Matters 20
5. Pre-Assembly Programme Evaluation 20
B. Report of the Programme Sub-Committee 21
1. Moderator's remarks 21
2. Report of the General Secretary 21
3. Updated Strategic Planning to including 2022 22

4. Plans and Budget 2021 and Plans 2021 Summary 22
5. Update on the Report from Busan to Karlsruhe 23
6. Pre-Assembly Programme Evaluation 23
7. Updates on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace activities in 2020 and 2021 23
8. Updated Proposal for Transversal 6 Overcoming Racism – detailed plans and budget 24
9. Updated Jerusalem Liaison Office, timeline and risk assessment 24
10. Updated Proposal for Commission on Health and Healing – Roadmap and By-Laws 25
11. Report of the Gender Advisory Group 25
12. Follow up to decisions Executive Committee Decisions of July on Programmes . 25
13. Summary Report of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs ... 25
C. Report of the Finance Sub-Committee 25
1. Matters arising on conducting financial monitoring 26
2. Budget 2021 26
3. Assembly framework budget 27
4. Extension of the WCC financial strategy 2018-2021 27
5. Financial Dimensions of the Green Village project 27
D. Report of the Steering Committee on Green Village 28
1. Strategy for land: Stockholm and Durban 28
C. Report of the Public Issues Sub-Committee 28
1. Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict 28
2. Statement on the Crisis in Ethiopia 29
D. Next executive committee meeting 29
APPENDIX 1 – Participants List 30
APPENDIX 2 – Brief notes from the meeting of the Joint Leadership of the Programme Sub-Committee and Finance Sub-Committee 32
APPENDIX 3 – Public Issues Statements 33

I. First Plenary Session, 9 November – Opening Actions

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the central committee, welcomed the members of the executive committee to the third meeting by video conference in 2020. This meeting had been planned to take place in the USA though that proved to be impossible due the global pandemic. She expressed gratitude to the staff for their commitment and called on H.E. Metropolitan Serafim Kykotis (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa) to lead the opening prayer. H.E. Metropolitan Serafim led the group in a prayer based on 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

The moderator asked the group to observe a minute of silence for those who have passed away since the last meeting, as well as their families.

B. Opening Actions

In a decision session, the threshold for participation (2/3) according to Rule XVIII.8 for meeting by electronic communications was met (see Appendix 1, Participants List).

Mr Doug Chial, interim director, office of the general secretariat, briefly went through the agenda for the meeting. He reminded the group of the protocols for the video conference including the use of indicator cards and the Zoom tool functions.

The agenda for the meeting was approved by consensus.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the executive committee by video conference, held 20-24 July 2020, were approved by consensus.

The minutes of the closed session from the July 2020 minutes were also approved by consensus.

The results of the vote by the central committee on the proposed temporary amendment to Rule VIII.9 were also noted for recording in the minutes. There were 81 central committee members who participated in the vote with 79 voting yes, 1 voting no, and 1 abstention. The vote closed on 30 September but since the threshold for participation was not reached, the proposed amendment did not pass.

The sub-committee leadership was confirmed by consensus:

- Personnel, Staffing and Nominations
    - Moderator, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima
    - Rapporteur, Ms Emily Evans
- Finance
    - Moderator, Rev. Karl Johnson
    - Rapporteur, Mrs Anne Glynn Mackoul

- Programme
    - Moderator, Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
    - Rapporteur, Rev. Karin van den Broeke
- Public issues
    - Moderator, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste.

In a hearing session the moderator's remarks and the report of the general secretary were presented.

II. Remarks by the Moderator

Dr Agnes Abuom briefly presented highlights from her paper on "Major Trends and Developments in 2020". The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reaches into all layers of society and affects health-related and economic issues in particular. She lamented all the lives lost including in this current second wave. Poverty is increasing, child abuse is increasing, there is a water crisis and in terms of governance, some leaders are using COVID-19 to entrench their own dictatorial approaches. This affects faith communities and civil society.

For the church COVID-19 has brought to the fore serious issues for the churches. Hospital visitations are restricted or forbidden. In some places if you are older or younger than determined ages, you are not allowed to go to in-person church services. Shrinking economies and unemployment are also affecting the church. There are increasing mental health issues which many churches and church hospitals do not have resources to address. There is more violence in the homes and a resurgence of cyber bullying. Unemployment, especially of younger people, is a concern worldwide.

At the same time, more than before, many are turning to prayer. WCC needs to help the member churches find ways accompany families and individuals.

III. Report of the Interim General Secretary

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, interim general secretary presented his report. The text is recorded here in full:

> This is the third online meeting of the executive committee. I am deeply thankful for your commitment to participate this week. We rely on the wisdom of the executive committee to monitor our ongoing work, to supervise the budget and deal with policy matters. The fellowship needs your guidance in leading the council through these difficult times, when the world looks for signs of hope.
>
> Two weeks ago the State of Geneva introduced a new semi-confinement for November. The rate of COVID infections here is three times higher than it was in March. Something had to be done. We continue to thank God for keeping the WCC staff healthy and resilient.

The three committees helping to prepare the assembly – the assembly planning committee, the assembly worship planning committee and the host committee – all met in the last two months. The last time they met was December 2019. We are back on track with new dates and deeper content as a basis for planning.

I am also happy to report that since the last meeting of the executive committee I worked intensely with the international assembly theme group and gave them guidance and direction on the theological grounding and unpacking of the theme. As you are aware, comments and questions on the very essence of the assembly theme continue to come from partners and member churches, in particular from those living in minority situations in Asia but also in Europe and the US. Since the theme is centred on the love of Christ, it was questioned to what extent such a theme does not become exclusivist, for Christians alone, or triumphalist and how could it open ways for dialogue and cooperation with the world and the people of other faiths.

Based on the Trinitarian theology, which over decades has been developed, articulated and agreed upon within WCC documents, I advised and directed the international theme group to place the love of Christ in the context of the love of the Triune God for the whole world that was fully manifested in the incarnation, in Jesus Christ.

When one speaks about the love of Christ, one speaks about the kenotic and indiscriminate love of God in Christ, for the whole of creation. This is the very essence of our faith. Taking this direction, we have also reaffirmed the direction of the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) of the WCC, which stated that reconciliation and unity are God's final purpose in Christ for humankind and creation (Colossians 1:19) and it was exemplified with Christ's compassion for the suffering in Matthew 9:35-39 and in many other passages of the four gospels. This perspective opened solid theological ways for dialogue and cooperation with the world.

The international theme group introduced a more sophisticated analysis of the signs of the times by identifying megatrends that are confronting the churches and the world. The group pointed to:

- COVID-19 and its consequences;
- the climate emergency;
- racism and growing social and economic inequalities;
- the undermining of democracy through authoritarian politics of fear and hate; and
- the ambiguous consequences of digital revolution.

All these are expressions and dimensions of a multifaceted civilizational crisis we are facing.

The assembly planning committee added to this list the increasing militarization of conflicts and the growing threat of nuclear warfare. The APC made also a strong plea for the need and opportunity of interfaith cooperation as cutting across all these challenges. It affirmed as well that the assembly needs to confront the injustices of

the past and present such as colonialism, the slave trade, genocide, and of course racism, if it is to generate hope for the future.

Christ's love opens a horizon of hope. It is indeed God's purpose to move the whole world and the entire cosmos to reconciliation and unity.

Each week I am more impressed with the ways my colleagues are adapting to online work. We all know it is not the best way to build fellowship, but we continue to find new and innovative methodologies to engage the member churches for the sake of unity, peace, justice and hope.

The accountability reports from September and October include a lot of information about what we have been doing. I want to highlight that we launched the new WCC website last month. It was a lot of work, but it shows how WCC is adapting to the digital revolution.

In October we convened the semi-annual staff planning days online. All staff were present, including colleagues in New York, Porto Alegre, Stockholm, Crete, Lomé, Nairobi, Kinshasa, Luanda and Jerusalem. We had an inspiring discussion on "adaptation" in which we shared how we are using different online tools. What we are learning now because we can't travel will be just as important when we can start travelling again.

The 2021 plans presented for approval at this meeting show how we are adapting. We have always listed events in our plans. Now we add a list of online productions. The 2021 plans also explain what has been postponed from this year. The plans reflect our hope for the year ahead, including the desire to begin in-person meetings again sometime after May, but that is looking harder and harder.

The programme expenditure budget for 2021 does not exceed available funds and makes no call on general reserves. As far as all usual activities of the WCC are concerned, the budget proposed for next year draws down about CHF 2 million in funds. At the same time, those results include depreciation charges of more than CHF 2 million. We are therefore bringing a budget, which does not anticipate an overall call on cash at bank. The sales transaction for the Kyoto land is also included in hope, in budget 2021, with a net increase in the building fund of CHF 18.6 million.

During this year, the Bossey Hotel and Conference Centre have caused us heartache, as income from hotel activities plummeted. Meanwhile, the return of students for the academic term raised hopes for all of us, and brought life to the campus. We made difficult decisions to reduce staff, from 18 to 11, and we budget only seven for 2021. With one building closed all year and most facilities closed for three months; the budget for 2021 is almost balanced and will contribute a positive cash flow toward loan reimbursements. This is no joy, of course, but represents necessity. We hope sincerely that business might resume during summer 2021 and will adapt if it comes true.

The steering committee brings recommendations for the strategy for land for phase three of the project, concerning office buildings Stockholm and Durban. The WCC was approached by two NGOs, and one international organization, interested in these two buildings.

The steering committee recognizes the opportunity to advance the project, reducing risks by involving the buyer early in the process. Further, the organizations are precisely in the vision for Green Village. We will hear further details in the finance presentation.

If there is one thing that keeps me from sleeping at night, it is the central committee meeting in Geneva next June. Already before this lock down, the staff leadership group expressed concern about an in-person meeting in June. There are three stark realities we must consider:

1. The pandemic will continue well into the next year. It rises and peaks, at varying levels in different regions at different times.
2. Even if an effective vaccine is released in the coming months, it will first be provided to health workers. Even in wealthy counties, the general population might only have access to the vaccine by the middle of the year. In most other countries, we cannot expect the wider population to receive the vaccine next year.
3. Central committee members with particular underlying health conditions or who are at higher risk of succumbing to COVID-19. We do not have a young central committee.

I rely on the executive committee for vision and guidance on how to convene the central committee if we do not meet in-person. I am thankful for the report of the remote rules working group and in addition, for the consultation with our lawyer.

According to Swiss ordinances put in place because of COVID-19 and extended to December 2021, the general secretary could require the central committee to vote on urgent issues by post or by electronic means. We must find therefore an agreed way to consult and make decisions, while preserving our ethos of fellowship and consensus. We have prepared some scenarios for you to consider, but we need more wisdom to continue.

The quorum for electronic communication is two-thirds (2/3). The proposed amendment failed because not enough people participated. We needed 97 members to participate, but only 81 did. We have to ask why participation was low, and whether this is an indication that we would have a challenge to meet the required participation levels for an online meeting of the central committee.

I feel an increasing pressure to answer our members and our churches. How is the WCC going to move forward with the central committee? How and when will it elect a new general secretary it if does not meet in-person? We must be transparent. We must say something. Where are we with the process of election and what are the

steps to be taken? If we do not say anything there will be suspicion or mistrust and the fellowship will suffer.

The world is facing unprecedented challenges. The moderator described these with great insight. With COVID-19 consequences, they appear like an overwhelming wall imprisoning the world. To bring this wall down, we need deep and radical changes, starting with the hope that it is possible to overcome paralysis and breach the wall.

The vision that carries us forward is rooted in our identity as a fellowship of churches which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Christ, the kenotic love and care of God for the whole world has been fully manifested. This gives us hope and courage to move forward but also makes us responsible to respond to and confront the many challenges of the world strengthened by the love of Christ.

The constitution of the WCC states in article 3: "The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."

The goal of visible unity we are seeking is clear. On the way, we continue to learn from each other what it entails to be this fellowship committed to discover and live in the unity of apostolic faith and to engage in a common witness to the world, how Christian unity and the unity of humankind and all creation are intertwined. In recent years, we have become far more sensitive about the process of moving together towards the unity that Christ prayed for.

In 2020, the door is wide open for ecumenical and inter-faith cooperation for the sake of justice, peace and healing in the world. The work of the WCC is needed more than ever. We will continue to walk, work and pray together in the living fellowship.

By God's grace and care, we are the ones God has called to lead the WCC in this difficult time. The executive committee has provided the vision we needed until now. I trust that you will continue in this meeting. Thank you.

The moderator thanked the general secretary for his report and added thanks to the steering committee for Green Village for all their work.

IV. Overview of matters for decision

The overview of matters for decision was presented by the general secretary. He reminded the group that each sub-committee had an overview of matters for decision to guide its work.

In addition to their usual agenda, all sub-committees were asked to look at the document on "Scenarios for Convening the Central Committee, June 2021". He urged the members to consider ways to engage the central committee in consultation and decision-making.

Fr Ioan Sauca went through the issues before the committee for decision in the areas of governance and nominations, public issues, programme, finance and Green Village.

In relation to the work done on constitution and rules review, H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) expressed his concern about the way in which the working group on constitution and rules, appointed by the central committee in 2018, had addressed the counter proposal on executive committee term limits. Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East), moderator of the working group, explained that the group had not agreed with integrating the proposal from the executive committee into its report and therefore felt it better to present both alternatives. Some discussion took place about the authority of working groups set up by the central committee versus that of the executive committee. This issue was referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee for consideration.

Dr Abuom thanked Fr Sauca for presenting the overview. The executive committee took a short break and returned to the hearing session to discuss the matters presented by the general secretary.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim thanked the moderator for her remarks and the general secretary for his report. He said that it is wise for the general secretary to consider the future, in this time of pandemic and how to make governance decisions. When the central committee comes together, it will of necessity need to be done differently. When the vote for a proposed amendment was launched a majority of the central committee members did not respond so perhaps using email and only asking for responses of those who do not agree would be a more helpful methodology in future.

V. Presentation on current financial situation

The moderator invited the finance director, Ms Elaine Dykes, to present the current financial situation to the committee.

A. Overall financial situation

Ms Dykes presented the current financial situation, including the results for the nine months to September; the forecast for 2020; and the outline of draft budget 2021, for approval at the meeting. She remarked that the COVID-19 pandemic had left its mark on the situation.

The contributions income decreased from CHF 18 million in 2019 towards a forecast for 2020 at CHF 14.8 million. This includes membership income as well as programme contributions, all gratefully received. The budget 2021 includes contributions income at a level increased by CHF 1.4 million, compared to forecast 2020. Details explaining the

reasons for anticipating a higher level of contributions are included in the budget analysis documents. Programme expenditure has been adapted according to the pattern of contribution income, both in forecast 2020 and draft budget 2021. There remain uncertainties concerning the level of programme expenditure in 2020; a lag in expenditure of ca. CHF 900,000 is noted at this point in the year. The year may close with higher programme fund balances, or with membership contributions unapplied to programmes, and credited to unrestricted funds.

For the Bossey Guest House and Conference Centre a deficit of CHF 829,000 (including depreciation of over CHF 400,000) is forecast. For 2021, plans include reductions in staffing; closing one of the buildings for the whole year; and closing most of the facilities for three months. With these steps, a reasonably balanced outcome is budgeted for next year.

With the sale of the Montreal shares in land, there were net gains in this year. After coverage of Implenia margins and provisions for taxes, the Montreal forecast is CHF 11.7 million in net gains in 2020. There is a possibility for a change in the tax status this year for WCC which will be advantageous, resulting in a higher net gain for 2020.

As has been communicated earlier, CHF 12 million of the total loan of CHF 24 million has now been reimbursed, with support and decision of the leadership of the finance sub-committee. In a discussion with WCC's financing bank for activities at the Ecumenical Centre, a favourable view was shared of WCC's borrowing potential, given the high land value. If the WCC would need more funds for something unexpected, the bank could issue further loans with the land as collateral. WCC has no intention of taking out another loan but it is positive that the bank considers WCC to be in good standing. The land valuations are judged at ca. CHF 100 million.

General reserves are forecast to be steady for end of this year, close to CHF 7 million.

B. Funds and Reserves

She continued the presentation on funds and reserves 2021 (see chart below).

Finance: Funds and reserves view 2021

CHF 000	Fund position **At 31 Dec 2019**	movement **Forecast 2020**	current mvmt **Sep-20**	mvmt **Budget 2021**	Budget fund positic **At 31 Dec 2021**
Programme funds	3,045	16	414	(525)	2,536
Assembly fund	1,220	(322)	(120)	(706)	192
	4,265	**(306)**	**294**	**(1,231)**	**2,728**
Restr fund for fixed assets	379	(770)	(1,408)	18,699	18,308
Deficit fund to be covered	(23,710)	12,000	12,000	0	(11,710)
Building project fund	527	(89)	(368)	(82)	356
Dsgnd fund for fixed assets	9,113	(864)	(662)	(838)	7,411
	(13,691)	**10,277**	**9,562**	**17,779**	**14,365**
Endowment fund	9,415	(414)	(52)	71	9,072
Unrestricted					
Bossey hotel and conf centre		(829)	(616)	(89)	
Unrestricted funds		410	164	51	
Ecumenical Centre		113	316	0	
General reserves	**6,922**	**(306)**	**(136)**	**(38)**	**6,578**
Total funds and reserves	**6,911**	**9,251**	**9,668**	**16,581**	**32,743**

As last audited at the end of 2019, there were CHF 6.9 million in total net funds and reserves. The figure includes the deficit of nearly CHF 24 million, causing very low net measure of funds and reserves. There is a CHF 9.2 million increase in funds and reserves forecast this year, and this is largely related to the movements in the building project. The deficit fund is being covered as a result of proceeds from land sales at CHF 12 million, matched with the reimbursement of loans. The results at September 2020 show CHF 9.7 million increase in funds and reserves. This is a good situation to be in this year.

The general secretary had mentioned that there was ca. CHF 2 million drawdown in funds and reserves in the budget 2021. If the Kyoto project transaction can go forward with land sales, there will be ca. CHF 18.6 million in increase of funds. The net results for the year are budgeted at CHF 16.6 million, reflecting a decrease of CHF 2 million in other funds.

The designated fund for fixed assets, which is a measure of how much WCC is invested already in its own buildings, is backed by building values, not cash, and the fund shows a rapid depreciation, as the wings of the Ecumenical Centre should be brought to zero net book value in 2023. The depreciation charges are a non-cash measure. The hope is that the end of 2021 might conclude with CHF 32 million in funds and reserves. This would be a very strong position for WCC, having cleared up the deficit fund. In terms of timing, it is unlikely that we can pay down the loan in 2021 because a sales transaction might not be likely until the end of the year, and the last chance to pay down the loan in 2021 would be in September. For this reason, there will probably still be a deficit fund at the end of next year.

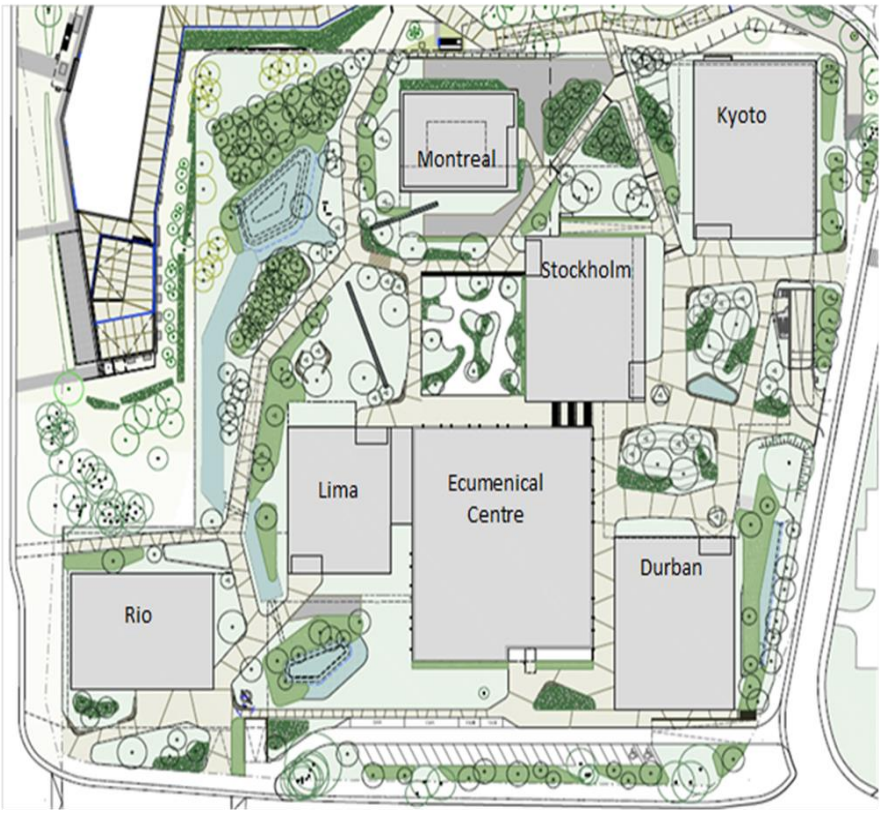
If the sales transaction for the Kyoto project proceeds in late 2021, the loan can be paid down in March 2022.

For the Bossey Guest House and Conference Centre, there is a deficit outcome budgeted of CHF 89,000 in 2021. Covering CHF 280,000 in depreciation, this would represent a positive cash flow of CHF 191,000 in 2021. It is of course sad if Bossey cannot run as usual, but important that it be ready to be opened when the situation changes.

The assembly fund closing balance at end of 2021 is a matter for concern. The table highlights a closing balance of CHF 192,000 for the assembly fund in the year just before the event. It perhaps shows over-prudence in not reflecting income expected in 2021. It is hoped that there will be contributions coming forward from the German ministry of foreign affairs. If this is not the case then there will be a revision and adaptation in assembly expenditures.

C. Green Village

Ms Dykes reminded the committee of the Green Village master plan.



Building	Type	GFS* m2	Floors	Estimate delivery:
Montreal	Residential	6,010	Ground +8	March 2023
Kyoto	Offices	13,990	Ground +9	March 2023
Rio	Hotel	7,840	Ground +7	2024
Lima	Offices	7,935	Ground +6	2026
Stockholm	Offices	9,040	Ground +6	2026
Durban	Offices	12,640	Ground +8	2026

The strategy will have to be decided for Durban (to be constructed on the site of the existing Lac wing) and Stockholm (on the existing Jura wing), both office buildings. The delay in the sale of Kyoto, also a large office building, should be considered. The steering committee has discussed whether the Durban building should be an office building or have another type of activity.

Confidential financial data was shared, for the information of executive committee only, demonstrating the level of land and real estate margin proceeds by project estimated as receivable by WCC, before tax. This data had also been reviewed at executive committee in November 2018. Estimates from that date showed an expectation of holding CHF 23.6 million, after covering the reimbursement of the loan, renovation of the Ecumenical Centre, and construction of Lima.

A second schedule of confidential data was shared reflecting updates from the November 2018 position. The margin expectation for Montreal had increased by CHF 5.5 million. Meanwhile the likelihood that Lima would be substantially more costly, since full fit-out would be required, had now been factored in. The possibility that LWF invest in Lima would have a favourable impact on costs to be covered by WCC on construction and fit-out. That favourable variable was not yet taken into account. When the financial table was adjusted to show the sale of the Durban plot, but not that of Stockholm, for which a land lease solution might be sought, there was an indication of a small shortfall of about CHF 1.2 million. That shortfall demonstrated that there could be feasibility to meet the project objectives with one land lease, out of the two plots Stockholm and Durban, but not with land lease for two. Without the substantial proceeds in land margins from at least one of the plots, the funding gap for the investments envisaged would move towards CHF 20 million.

Dr Abuom thanked Ms Dykes for the comprehensive presentations on the financial situation and Green Village.

VI. First Session on Public Issues

Dr Abuom moved to a discussion of public issues, noting that there were three proposals for public issues statements on the table. The committee would need to agree on issuing these statements. Comments to the statements could be sent to the subcommittee by email. Following this the public issues sub-committee would work on them and bring revised

versions back to the plenary for decision. She asked H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, moderator of the public issues sub-committee, to introduce the statements.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon said that the statements had been prepared by the staff in consultation with those in the regions:

- Draft Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (Doc. No. 05)
- Draft Statement on Elections in the United States of America (Doc. No. 06)
- Draft Statement on the Crisis in Ethiopia (Doc. No. 07)

He added that procedures for public issues would also be presented to the sub-committee for information. He asked that any comments to the statement be sent by 20:00 Geneva time, Monday, 9 November. He asked Mr Peter Prove, CCIA Director, to comment further on the statements.

Mr Prove said that the statements resulted from a series of discussions with the staff leadership group and the leadership of the central committee on which issues should have priority for this meeting. There are of course many other pressing issues but an executive committee held by video conference, can only address a few public statements.

A. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykzian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]) expressed his disappointment with the statement. He drew attention to the atrocities which were happening in the region during this war. He felt the statement was neither explicit nor strong enough and that it needed to sound more like one coming from a church organization, not an NGO.

He added that there are jihadists from other countries and Turks fighting in the conflict. The statement needs to be more than an invitation to peace. The outrageous acts on the Azeri side must be witnessed to.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate), vice-moderator of the central committee, agreed that the draft needed a complete revision. He asked about the consultation process as building such statements on behalf of the fellowship can only be done with people on the ground.

Fr Ioan Sauca responded that staff work with the CCIA commission which provide direction and advice. The general secretary never issues any statement without first consulting the member churches. The first recent statement on Nagorno-Karabakh was signed only after consulting H.E. Archbishop Vicken. The two Armenian staff colleagues are in constant contact with their churches. Any statement WCC makes must be meaningful and credible. There is also a need to be balanced without losing credibility. He said it would be helpful to have H.E. Archbishop Vicken's participation in the sub-committee.

Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, advisor to the committee from ACT Alliance, informed the group that the Armenia Round Table was a member of ACT Alliance and were operational in Armenia and in the conflict zones. The RT has expressed frustration with general

statements. Mr Bueno de Faria felt that real problems need to be exposed. He said that ACT Alliance does not issue such public statements, but are currently offering assistance for COVID-19 in those areas. He also added that it would be good for WCC to use the space of UN Security Council working group. In this group WCC can testify to the situation on the ground without speaking publically. The UNDP and office on prevention of genocide are proposing to have meeting with religious leaders of the two countries and WCC should engage in this debate.

Mr Prove said that the staff had been following this tragic situation since it re-emerged in late September and have taken into account information from church and other sources. He said that they had engaged in research of WCC initiatives taken in 1990s, in particular interreligious engagements which were important at that time. There is a close contact in the Armenian defensive and foreign ministries so that WCC receives information close to the ground, particularly in Shushi. The staff are very conscious of the existential dimensions of this conflict for all Armenians and there is particular concern about other powers in the region, in particular Turkey, and how their involvement has exacerbated the conflict. He felt it was also important to keep open the possibility of interreligious engagement in future in order to promote environment conducive to peace in longer term. At the same time it is critical to connect with the experience of Armenians, representing the situation as they see it. He affirmed the need for WCC to speak clearly on this matter at this time.

Reading the room, the moderator said that the executive committee should issue a statement but that the current draft was not sufficient. H.E. Metropolitan Nifon agreed that the statement wold need to be more convincing and reiterated the invitation for executive committee members to send in their comments. Dr Abuom asked H.E. Archbishop Vicken and H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios to participate in the meeting of the public issues sub-committee for further work on the statement. Mr Prove was asked to bring a new draft to the meeting of the public issues sub-committee the following day. This was agreed by consensus.

B. Elections in the United States of America

Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul noted that the statement was drafted in anticipation of violence rather than what actually happened. She questioned whether such a statement was needed at this time. Given that racism will certainly come up again in the US context, it would be better to wait. Bishop Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church), vice-moderator of the central committee, agreed.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios encouraged caution on public statements about elections in particular countries. He said it was better for national councils rather than WCC to issues such statements. He agreed with a suggestions for the general secretary to send a congratulations letter to the president-elect.

The committee agreed by consensus not to issue a statement about the situation in the United States at this time.

After the discussion H.E. Metropolitan Serafim suggested that, because WCC is involved in climate change action, a statement could be made when the new president decides on the global climate agreement. Note was taken of the suggestion and staff would follow up as needed.

C. Crisis in Ethiopia

The committee agreed by consensus to issue a statement on the crisis in Ethiopia and asked the public issues sub-committee to work on the draft for presentation back to plenary for decision.

VII. First Plenary Session – Closing remarks

Dr Agnes Abuom said that even though these are difficult times, the executive committee is still called to carry out our responsibilities. The committee has seen the good work done by secretariat, despite the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. The issues brought forward in the session have been referred to sub-committees for further work. She thanked everyone for their hard work noting that while this is neither easy nor simple, we can support each other and discern what is best said and done now. The moderator closed the session.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim led the closing prayer.

VIII. Second Session on Public Issues

On Wednesday, 11 November, there was a brief hearing session in plenary before the sub-committees met to discuss the statement on Nagorno-Karabakh. The threshold for participation was reached.

Before the discussion began, Rev. Festus Ambe Asana (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon) was invited to tell the members about his situation. He was participating in the meeting from Baminda in Cameroon. The previous morning he has woken up to shooting around his house. The Baminda quarter is at the heart of the area of insecurity. The shooting moved to another area but in the evening it started again so that he and his family had to take cover between strong walls of the house. The shooting continued till past midnight. He said that he was thankful to be alive and for God's protection.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson led the group in a brief prayer to begin the session.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon reported that the public issues sub-committee had spent a lot of time discussing the draft text on Nagorno-Karabakh, trying to find a statement acceptable to all. H.E. Archbishop Vicken participated actively and testified to the situation. Mr Prove was asked to read the revised draft statement.

Mr Prove read the statement noting that the draft was a result of a discussion with H.E. Archbishop Vicken. However, the sub-committee had not yet received confirmation that he had approved this version. H.E. Metropolitan Nifon insisted that the statement go by H.E. Archbishop Vicken before being issued. The other executive committee members agreed.

Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev (Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate]) thanked the group for the new draft. He asked that there be an honest formulation on the role of Turkey in the conflict. He also cautioned that the first paragraph gave an impression that there is disappointment at the end of the war. Even if the terms are not the most satisfactory, the end of the war will result in less loss of lives and this is a positive sign.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios also thanked the members of the public issues sub-committee for their work. He expressed some doubt as to whether the current draft was strong enough. It is important to speak about justice for the Armenian people.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim agreed with Fr Mikhail that ending the war is an achievement, not to be regretted, and at least there will be no more killing of children. He felt the term "refugees" should be intentionally used and that the executive committee should call for them to be allowed to come back to their homes. He said that the public issues sub-committee had taken into account the voice of the local church – 99% of Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church – and that he felt good about the statement. He thanked the moderator of the sub-committee and the CCIA director.

Mr Prove received the comments from the committee and would integrate them into the next draft. The statement would come back to another plenary and H.E. Archbishop Vicken would be asked to comment.

IX. Third Session on Public Issues

On Thursday, 12 November, the moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, welcomed the committee to the second extraordinary hearing session on the draft statement on Nagorno Karabakh. The threshold for participation was reached. Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) opened the meeting in prayer.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, moderator of the public issues sub-committee, reported that the statement had been discussed in detail and that the sub-committee had worked with H.E. Archbishop Vicken.

When asked to respond H.E. Archbishop Vicken felt that the statement was still not strong enough. There was no mention of jihadists, for instance from Pakistan, or of the Turkish forces. The atrocities that are happening are not named in the statement and this weakens it. He asked that WCC not issue such a neutral statement about this grave situation. He also highlighted the need to speak about the holy sites which had been destroyed and about

preventing more destruction from occurring. He suggested adding a paragraph inviting UNESCO to come in and protect the holy sites, over 700 churches and holy sites in Karabakh.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios summarized the points to be included:
1. Invitation to UNESCO to protect the holy sites
2. The 11,000 refugees
3. The role of the jihadists.

Dr Abuom asked the sub-committee to take these points and come back with a revised statement the following day.

The session was closed and the executive committee moved into sub-committee meetings.

X. Decision Session

On Friday, 13 November, the executive committee reconvened in plenary for a decision session, moderated by Bishop Mary Ann Swenson. The threshold of participation was reached.

Mr Doug Chial went over the video conference protocol and presented the agenda for the session. Rev. Dr Samson Olasupo Adeniyi Ayokunle (Nigerian Baptist Convention) led the group in an opening prayer.

A. Report of the Personnel, Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee

The report of the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee was presented to the plenary. Ms Emily Evans (Uniting Church in Australia), as rapporteur, read the recommendations in the report.

1. Moderator's Remarks and Report of the Interim General Secretary

The recommendations:

*That the executive committee **receive** the Moderator's Remarks and the Report of the Interim General Secretary with appreciation;*
*To **convene** an extraordinary meeting of the executive committee in February 2021 (15-17 February 2021) to make a final decision on the manner of convening the central committee;*

were approved by consensus.

2. Report of the Remote Rules Review Group

The recommendation:

*To **affirm** the report of the remote rules review group;*

was approved by consensus.

3. Scenarios for Convening the Central Committee, June 2021

With regard to the combined recommendation of the sub-committee on convening the central committee and the recommendations of the remote rules review group, the general secretary asked the executive committee to strongly consider limiting the mandating the working group on constitution and rules to only discussing convening of the central committee. He said there was not much time between now and the next executive committee meeting in February 2021 and that working under COVID-19 restrictions limited the capacity of the staff, however adaptable they have proven. He asked that the executive committee postpone the task of revising the rules for decision by the central committee until the work of finding a way to convene the central committee was determined.

He added that a central committee member had written to some members of the executive committee saying that the working group on constitution and rules, appointed by the central committee in 2018, had submitted its report which could not be changed.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul added that this related to the issue of authority discussed earlier in the meeting. If the general secretary would invite the working group to reopen its report, then there would have be a clear direction and assertion of authority of the executive committee.

Ms Evans explained that the sub-committee, while recognizing that the convening of the central committee is the priority task, saw that the tasks of the groups overlapped and had therefore suggested a combined recommendation.

Fr Ioan thanked the sub-committee and appreciated the work of the remote review rules group. He stated that he would participate in the meetings of the working group so clear proposals on the way forward in the short term can come to the executive committee in February.

The revised recommendations:

*To **require** the working group on constitution and rules to re-convene to propose alternatives for a central committee meeting and how required decisions will be carried out including the process of the election of new general secretary, assembly preparations and general rules; to report to the extraordinary meeting of the executive committee in February 2021; and*

*To **require** the working group on constitution and rules to work with some members of the review group to:*

a) *Integrate into the proposed amendments of the constitution, rules and supplement to the rules prepared by the Working Group on the Constitution and Rules (i) new language based upon the report of the review group, (ii) the concrete proposals by the executive committee (November 2019), (iii) the proposals from the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (replacing the word "acting" with the word "interim"), (iv) any related changes to conform the Working Group documents for consistency with the report of the review group;*
b) *Prepare a report describing these added proposals to accompany the Report of the Working Group, insuring that one coherent proposal for amendments to the constitution and rules and supplement will be presented to the next meeting of the central committee;*
c) *Complete this work before the next ordinary meeting of the executive committee;*

were approved by consensus.

4. Membership Matters

The application for membership in the WCC of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM-SA) was welcomed by the sub-committee. The report of the visit was also well received.

The recommendations:

*1. To **receive** the report of the visit to the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa with its recommendation;*
*2. To **receive** the recommendation of the PCCC; and*
*3. To **recommend** to the central committee that the application of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa be "accepted for a specified interim period of participation in the work of the World Council of Churches and for interaction with the local fellowship of member churches", towards acceptance as a member church, according to Rule 1.5;*

were approved by consensus.

5. Pre-Assembly Programme Evaluation

The document on pre-assembly programme evaluation was received and its importance in reviewing how programmes undertaken since 2014 have helped to implement the strategic plan was affirmed.

In the discussion, H.E. Metropolitan Serafim reminded the committee that no additional expenditures should be made which might risk carrying out the assembly.

The recommendations:

*That the executive committee **approve** the terms of reference and **appoint** an evaluation team for the pre-assembly programme evaluation, which is meant to assist the WCC 11th Assembly in its review of programmes undertaken to implement policies adopted by 10th Assembly, i.e. WCC strategic plan and the pilgrimage of justice and peace;*

1. *Mrs Margarita Nelyubova, Russian Orthodox Church – central committee member*
2. *Rev. Karl Johnson, Baptist Union of Jamaica – central committee member, executive committee proxy, mid-term evaluation team*
3. *Mr Yilikal Shiferaw, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church – central committee member*
4. *Ms Larissa Ribeiro de Aguiar Garcia, Methodist Church in Brazil – central committee youth advisor, ECHOS commission member*
5. *Specialized Ministry – in consultation with round table core group (North American);*

were approved by consensus.

The report of the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

B. Report of the Programme Sub-Committee

The report of the programme sub-committee was presented to the plenary. Rev Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands), as rapporteur, read the recommendations in the report.

1. Moderator's remarks

The recommendations that the executive committee:

***Receive** the remarks with appreciation;*
***Highlight** the comprehensive and accurate way the moderator describes socio-economic and religious trends;*
***Underline** her statement on the vital role churches can play under the COVID-19 circumstances; and*
***Thank** the moderator and the leadership team for the work done in the extraordinary situation of 2020;*

were approved by consensus.

2. Report of the General Secretary

The recommendations that the executive committee:

***Receive** the report with appreciation;*
***Thank** the interim general secretary for his monthly accountability reports;*

Ask *the general secretary, taking note of the "Minute on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems – 'Killer Robots'" adopted by the executive committee in 2019, to ask the assembly planning committee and the international theme group to create space during the 11th Assembly to deal with digital revolution and militarization in the context of the efforts of the pre-emptive ban on fully autonomous weapons and the prophetic warning against the dangerous manipulation of artificial intelligence; and*
Thank *the interim general secretary and his staff for the work done;*

were approved by consensus.

3. Updated Strategic Planning to including 2022

The recommendations that the executive committee:

Recommend *to the central committee to extend the WCC Strategic Plan (2018- 2021) by one year to include 2022, coinciding with the WCC 11th Assembly now taking place in 2022 (Doc. No. GEN PRO 05, central committee, June 2018); and*
Extend *the period of monitoring programmatic outcomes (2018-2021) by one year to include 2022, coinciding with the WCC 11th Assembly now taking place in 2022 (Doc. No. 28, executive committee, May 2019);*

were approved by consensus.

In the discussion, H.E. Metropolitan Serafim again reminded the committee that no additional expenditures should be made which might risk carrying out the assembly.

4. Plans and Budget 2021 and Plans 2021 Summary

The plans express the hope of being able to travel in 2021. Since the beginning of COVID-19, new models of strengthening the fellowship have been developed. Concerns were raised on differences between regions in having access to technology and in being willing to use hybrid methods of communication. The importance of having good communication with regional ecumenical organization offices and leaders was affirmed.

The recommendations that the executive committee:

Receive *and* ***approve*** *plans and budgets 2021 with appreciation;*
Highlight *how COVID-19 is a challenge and an opportunity for strengthening communication within the fellowship;*
Encourage *further monitoring of plans and budgets; and*
Affirm *the direction of responding to the challenges as an opportunity to strengthen a broad spectrum in methods of communication within the fellowship of churches;*

were approved by consensus.

5. **Update on the Report from Busan to Karlsruhe**

Among other suggestions, introductions to the sections of the report should include the possibility of interviews. It would be appropriate to include an interview with the interim general secretary, who has led the WCC through such an extraordinary period of time.

The recommendations that the executive committee:

Underline *the necessity to describe the consequences of COVID-19 for the assembly and for the fellowship; and*
Affirm *the revised outline, providing the remarks of the programme sub-committee, including one chapter on the role of the WCC in the midst of the global pandemic, and the revised timeline 2021 for final approval of the report;*

were approved by consensus.

6. **Pre-Assembly Programme Evaluation**

The recommendation that the executive committee:

Approve *the proposed terms of reference noting that the evaluation is intended to assist the WCC 11th Assembly in its review of programmes undertaken to implement policies adopted by 10th Assembly, i.e. WCC strategic plan and the pilgrimage of justice and peace;*

was approved by consensus.

7. **Updates on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace activities in 2020 and 2021**

The recommendations that the executive committee:

Receive *the updates with appreciation.*
Request *that the interim general secretary:*
a) study the recommendations of the five annexes;
b) identify recommendations related to WCC programmatic work and preparations for the 11th Assembly;
c) Assess the applicability of the recommendations in comparison with recommendations on the same made by the executive committee;
d) Implement the recommendations according to their relevance to the work of the WCC;

were approved by consensus.

8. Updated Proposal for Transversal 6 Overcoming Racism – detailed plans and budget

Before the recommendations came to the committee for decision, there was a discussion on reference groups as the recommendations for the transversal on overcoming racism included establishing a new reference group.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul spoke about the work done by the working group on constitution and rules concerning reference, consultative and advisory groups. Such a reference group fits into the current understanding of a group accompanying a major programmatic initiative. The working group's proposal that will go forward to the central committee is that reference groups begin following one assembly and conclude before the next one. The reference groups appointed by the central committee do not exceed the mandate of the central committee itself. While the work on overcoming racism is important, it should be clear that any reference group named would have only a limited mandate, until the 11th Assembly in 2022. This same understanding would apply for advisory groups.

With this understanding, the recommendations that the executive committee:

Ask *the general secretary to form the new reference group in a way consistent with the proposals of the Working Group on the Constitution and Rules, pending approval by the central committee, reviewed by the executive committee in November 2019, Doc. Nos. 11, 11.1, 11.2 related to the proposed new section of the Supplement to the Rules (11.2) describing the distinctions among committees, reference and advisory groups;*
Approve *the plans and budgets for 2021;*

were approved by consensus.

9. Updated Jerusalem Liaison Office, timeline and risk assessment

In the discussion on the Jerusalem Liaison Office, a recommendation was made that any formation of a reference group should be postponed till there is more clarity on this project.

The revised recommendations that the executive committee:

Request *the general secretary to continue clarifying structures, differentiated roles, budgets, coordination between offices, mechanisms for monitoring and mutual accountability; and to continue finding ways to fund the work and implement alternative methods of accompaniment during the disruption of in-person ecumenical accompaniers;*
Approve *the proposed direction;*

were approved by consensus.

10. Updated Proposal for Commission on Health and Healing – Roadmap and By-Laws

The recommendations that the executive committee:

Ask *the general secretary to continue developing the proposed direction to be consistent with the proposals of the Working Group on the Constitution and Rules, pending approval by the central committee, reviewed by the executive committee in November 2019, Doc. Nos. 11, 11.1, 11.2 related to the proposed new section of the Supplement to the Rules (11.2) describing the distinctions among committees, reference and advisory groups;*
Request *that the by-laws be forwarded for review by the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee at the next regular meeting of the executive committee*
Approve *the direction proposed;*

were approved by consensus.

11. Report of the Gender Advisory Group

The programme sub-committee received and discussed the document. It was felt that, as the current gender advisory group is already accompanying the work of the just community of women and men, a reference group could be established following the next assembly if the next central committee so decides.

12. Follow up to decisions Executive Committee Decisions of July on Programmes

The committee took note of the follow up to previous executive committee decisions. It also noted the need to align proposals for modifying the WCC strategic plan 2018-2021 and financial strategy 2018-2021, in light of the assembly taking place in 2022.

13. Summary Report of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

The recommendations that the executive

Receive *the summary report with appreciation;*
Affirm *the recommendations of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs;*

were agreed by consensus.

The report of the programme sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

C. Report of the Finance Sub-Committee

Following a break the report of the finance sub-committee was presented by Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul, rapporteur of the sub-committee.

1. **Matters arising on conducting financial monitoring**

The recommendations that executive committee:

i. ***receive*** *the report of the audit committee (Doc. No. 33), acknowledging with gratitude the contribution of the professional volunteers who serve the WCC in the committee;*
ii. ***delegate*** *to the leadership of the finance sub-committee the authority to approve and authorise for issue the financial statements 2020;*
iii. ***decide*** *to waive the requirement under Swiss law (article 731 para. 2 CO) that the auditor be present when decisions are made concerning the financial statements;*
iv. *further to the specific delegation of authority made in July 2020,* ***acknowledge*** *the decision of the leadership of the finance sub-committee concerning the further reimbursement of CHF 6 million in loans on 30 September, bringing the total reimbursements in 2020 to CHF 12 million;*
v. ***affirm*** *the decision of executive committee in November 2019, that CHF 500,000 be transferred in 2020 from the restricted fund for fixed assets to the general reserves, for transfer to the building project fund, and require that the transfers be completed in closing 2020;*
vi. ***require*** *that the internal control scoping matrix, defining risks and controls over the completeness and accuracy of financial reporting, in the context of materiality, be presented for review by the finance sub-committee in 2021;*
vii. *in the context of the first phase of the ERP system project, which should reach a point of decision-making in the next month,* ***require*** *that the leadership of the finance sub-committee receive a report from the decisional group leading the system project, confirming the decision to go live in January 2021 for phase 1, or any other decision; and*
viii. ***require*** *that the staff evaluation process for 2020 also include reference to discussion of particular achievements and challenges encountered in 2019, where an evaluation was not filed for that year; and a report be brought on progress at the next meeting*

were approved by consensus.

2. **Budget 2021**

The recommendations that the executive committee:

i. ***receive*** *and* ***approve*** *the budget 2021 summarized in Doc. No. 32 with recognition of the challenges, and, in particular with reference to point 4 below, require that the assembly expenditure budget for 2021 be adjusted as may prove necessary, depending on assembly contributions income to be confirmed for 2021, and not yet included in the budget;*

ii. *dependent on the decision at this meeting concerning the postponement of an in-person meeting of the central committee until 2022 or a later date,* ***require*** *that the budget and plans with reference to central committee be adjusted accordingly, with the balance for the central committee to be carried forward to the next year; and*

iii. ***approve*** *the capital expenditure budget of CHF 767,000 for 2021, including CHF 396,000 for the ERP system project*

were approved by consensus.

3. Assembly framework budget

The committee noted that for the Busan Assembly, CHF 2.3 million was held in the closing balance of the fund, in the year before the assembly. The assembly framework budget reviewed projected only CHF 192,000 at 31 December 2021, leading up to the event in 2022.

The recommendations that the executive committee:

i. ***receive*** *for information the assembly framework budget summarized in Doc. No. 29;*
ii. ***require*** *that budget 2021 for the assembly be adapted, as income is pledged, or with adjustment of the budgeted expenditure, to ensure that an adequate fund balance is held at the end of 2021, noting that an adequate balance might be estimated at CHF 1.2 million as a minimum; and*
iii. ***require*** *that work continue and the budget 2018-2022 be brought forward to the next meeting, with a view to its approval by June 2021*

were approved by consensus.

4. Extension of the WCC financial strategy 2018-2021

The recommendation that executive committee:
- ***require*** *that the financial strategy be reconsidered as required, for discussion at the next executive committee meeting, before submission to central committee*

was approved by consensus.

5. Financial Dimensions of the Green Village project

The recommendations that executive committee:

i. ***encourage*** *the next step in negotiations with LWF on their possible engagement in the Lima project, together with the terms for their sub-lease in Kyoto, with a report to be brought to the next meeting;*
ii. ***require*** *that consideration be given to the documented control process in relation to the open-book monitoring of Montreal project costs; and that the process be presented at the next meeting;*
iii. *in the context of the decision to move to Kyoto for 2023-2026, and the costs and financial risks entailed,* ***require*** *that studies be completed, for review with a specialist consultant, to ensure that the negotiation on which costs might be covered within the project's revised financial plan is concluded in WCC's interest; and that an assessment of the financial provision required for other costs is prepared, with the benefit of review by a real estate specialist in leasing; and*
iv. ***encourage*** *further work to find solutions with Implenia for bridging finance for construction of Kyoto until an investor is identified, including the study of a possible guarantee structure related to the Kyoto land plot, should it prove necessary to avoid construction site closure, while noting that any such guarantee requires a risk analysis and an approval by executive committee*

were approved by consensus.

Appreciation was expressed for the work by staff and the experts on Green Village.

The report of the finance sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

A special word of thanks was expressed to Mr Mark Johnson, finance manager, for his dedicated service since 2006. The committee wished him well in his retirement.

D. Report of the Steering Committee on Green Village

The general secretary presented the report of the steering committee on the Green Village.

1. Strategy for land: Stockholm and Durban

The recommendations that executive committee decide that:

- *In the interest of obtaining the target income of CHF 3 million from the development, and subject to the results of the studies and market sounding described below, the lease hold structure continues to be explored as the preferred strategy for the Stockholm plot; and*

- *The strategy for the Durban plot will be sale of land and project, with the opportunity to generate capital towards coverage of costs for construction of Lima*

were approved by consensus.

C. Report of the Public Issues Sub-Committee

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, moderator of the public Issues sub-committee, presented the report. Three draft statements had been received and the committee had decided not to issue a statement on the USA at this time. The sub-committee had worked on two statements.

1. Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon expressed his gratefulness to H.E. Archbishop Vicken for all the help in making the statement prophetic and clear. H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim also expressed his thanks to the public issues sub-committee, while sharing his frustration at the humanitarian tragedy in this region.

The statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was read in full and adopted by consensus.

The full text is available in Appendix 3.

2. Statement on the Crisis in Ethiopia

The statement on the crisis in Ethiopia read in full and some changes were suggested. The statement was adopted by consensus.

The full text is available in Appendix 3.

The moderator of the public issues sub-committee was very grateful to staff and the sub-committee members for all the work done. The executive committee expressed its thanks through applause.

The report of the public issues sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

D. Next executive committee meeting

The dates of 15-17 February 2021 had already been set for the extraordinary meeting of the executive committee. The main agenda item would be convening the central committee. As necessary a few other items may be added to the agenda.

This was agreed by consensus.

Ms Emily Evans added her encouragement for the committee members' use of the Governing Body Document Resource and Discussion Portal in advance of that meeting. The portal can be used to pose questions and share comments on the working group's proposals for convening the central committee, before the executive committee holds its meeting.

As the session closed, the moderator of the central committee, Dr Agnes Abuom, offered her thanks to the members of the executive committee for their constructive and active participation. She thanked the staff, without whose very committed support the executive committee could not have achieved the decisions taken. Moderators and rapporteurs of the sub-committees as well as the prayer leaders were also thanked.

APPENDIX 1 – Participants List

Dr Agnes ABUOM, Anglican Church of Kenya
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Bishop Mary Ann SWENSON, United Methodist Church
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA, World Council of Churches

H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune AREGAWI, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe ASANA, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken AYKAZIAN, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Rev. Samson Olasupo Adeniyi AYOKUNLE, Nigerian Baptist Convention
Rev. Dr Hyunju BAE, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Bishop Petra BOSSE-HUBER, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Ms Emily Jane EVANS, Uniting Church in Australia
Mrs Anne GLYNN-MACKOUL, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDIAEV, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Anne HEITMANN, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (proxy for Bishop Bosse-Huber)
Rev. Karl JOHNSON, Jamaica Baptist Union
Rev. Martina Viktorie KOPECKÁ, Czechoslovak Hussite Church
H.E. Metropolitan Serafim KYKOTIS, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Rev. Everdith Yaritza LANDRAU, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr Manhong LIN, China Christian Council
H.E. Metropolitan Zachariah Mar NICHOLOVOS, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr NIFON OF TARGOVISTE, Romanian Orthodox Church
Bishop Simo PEURA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Rev. Karin VAN DEN BROEKE, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Bishop John F. WHITE, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Apologies
Rev. Cora Luisa ANTONIO MATAMOROS, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
Rev. Taaroanui MARAEA, Église protestante Maohi
Bishop Rex R. B. REYES, Jr., Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Advisor
Mr Rudelmar BUENO DE FARIA, ACT Alliance

Staff
Ms Charlotte BELOT, Assembly Administrator
Mr Douglas L. CHIAL, Interim Director, Office of the General Secretariat
Ms Catherine CHRIST-TAHA, Conference Office
Ms Elaine DYKES, Finance Director
Ms Marianne EJDERSTEN, Communications Director
Mr Mark JOHNSON, Finance Manager
Mr Georges LEMOPOULOS, Consensus Consultant
Mr Marc-Henri HEINIGER, Assembly Logistics Coordinator

Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso MATEUS, Interim Deputy General Secretary
Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo PHIRI, Deputy General Secretary
Mr Peter PROVE, CCIA Director
Rev. Dr Benjamin SIMON, Church Relations
Ms Karina VARTANOVA, Finance Manager

Sub-Committees

Staffing, Personnel and Nominations
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe Asana
Ms Emily Evans (rap)
H.E. Metr. Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (mod)
Rev. Dr Manhong Lin
H.E. Metr. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos
H.E. Metr. Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Bishop Simo Peura
Bishop John F White
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca

Finance
Rev. Dr Samson Ayokunle
Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul (rap)
Rev. Karl Johnson (mod)
H.E. Metr. Serafim Kykotis
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson

Programme
Dr Agnes Abuom
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev
Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (mod)
Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká
Rev. Everdith Landrau
Rev. Karin van den Broeke (rap)
Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, Advisor

Public Issues
Dr Agnes Abuom
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe Asana
H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune Aregawi
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian
Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae
Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul
H.E. Metr. Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (mod)
Rev. Karin van den Broeke
Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, Advisor

APPENDIX 2 – Brief notes from the meeting of the Joint Leadership of the Programme Sub-Committee and Finance Sub-Committee

The leadership of the programme and finance sub-committees met, together with staff serving the sub-committees, on Thursday, 12 November 2020 to address issues of common concern and interest.

1. Scenarios for Convening the central committee, June 2019 (Doc. No. 25)

Both sub-committees reviewed document 25 and sent feedback to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee as requested. The leadership of both the programme and finance sub-committees agreed that if, at this meeting, the executive committee decides that the central committee will not meet in Geneva in June 2021 as planned, then the budget and plans proposed for approval should be adjusted to align with the decision.

2. Budgets, plans and assembly

The leadership acknowledged that the plans and budget for 2021 reflect the hope that international travel and meetings will resume sometime next year. They affirmed this is a risk because there is no certainty at the moment. They discussed the risks in the assembly budget due to the postponement and uncertainty how COVID-19 will effect assembly contributions. They agreed that the risks for 2021 and 2022 need to be monitored carefully; and that adjustments may be needed.

3. Consolidation of Jerusalem-based activities

The programme sub-committee leadership affirmed the sub-committee recommendation to implementation of the Jerusalem Liaison Office not from January 2021, but from July 2021 (Doc. No. 17). The delay in implementation is an opportunity to clarify outstanding issues and achieve a consensus among all stakeholders. The finance sub-committee leadership affirmed that budget is based on implementation from July 2021; and that the budget includes an allocation of CHF 70,000 from programme contributions earmarked for public witness.

Participants

Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber
Rev. Karin van den Broeke
Rev. Karl Johnson
Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul

Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri
Rev. Prof. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus
Ms Elaine Dykes
Ms Marianne Ejdersten
Mr Douglas L. Chial
Mr Mark Johnson
Ms Karina Vartanova

APPENDIX 3 – Public Issues Statements

Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
(Amos 5:24)

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), meeting by video conference on 9-13 November 2020, is gathered at a pivotal and acutely painful moment for the people of the land of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and for all Armenian people, following the announcement of an agreement between the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia to bring an end to six weeks of intense armed conflict. We make an appeal for an end to the bloodshed and destruction this conflict has brought.

We join with His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, in praying for wisdom, unity and calm. We grieve with all those who have suffered terrible losses not only in the renewed fighting since 27 September, but throughout the long history of the struggle for self-determination in the region, entrenching antagonism more deeply with each precious life lost.

We stand in solidarity with the Armenian communities that are threatened by the renewal of the genocide against their people, particularly in light of the egregious comments made by Turkish President Erdogan vowing to "fulfil this mission, which our grandfathers have carried out for centuries, in the Caucasus region" and in light of Turkey's role in the current conflict. The WCC condemns any such threats, explicit or implicit, and the actions of those who have insinuated themselves in the conflict and exacerbated its violence, including by supplying internationally-banned weapons, sending mercenaries and jihadists from Syria and elsewhere, and seeking to turn it into a religious conflict. The WCC condemns the use of chemical weapons and cluster munitions, the targeting of civilians, hospitals and public infrastructure, and all other war crimes, beheadings, torture and other atrocities witnessed in the past weeks.

Furthermore, we appeal for respect for the holy sites and cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, though the repeated shelling of the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi on 8 October and the numerous reports being received of other more recent desecrations indicate a different reality. We urge UNESCO to take all possible and appropriate measures to protect these sites.

We call urgently upon all members of the international community to join in supporting efforts for the protection of such holy sites, for the return in safety and dignity of all refugees and displaced people, for protection of the Armenian people from the threat of genocide, for a lasting peace founded on justice and human rights for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and the wider region, and to refrain from instigating or encouraging antagonism, conflict and injustice.

We lift up and accompany the continuing ministry and witness of the churches of the region, and pray that the church leaders may be given strength and wisdom to guide their people through this crisis.

Statement on the Crisis in Ethiopia

Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed, and do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.
(Jeremiah 22:3)

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), meeting by video conference on 9-13 November 2020, lifts up in prayer the people and churches of Ethiopia in the midst of a grave crisis resulting from the instrumentalization of ethnic and religious differences by politicians and extremists, threatening the very fabric of the nation and the security of all its people.

The current conflict between the Ethiopian Federal Government and the leadership and militias of Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray has been preceded by a period of escalating tensions and violence targeting specific ethnic and/or religious communities. The WCC condemns the numerous brutally violent attacks against churches and communities especially affecting the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, on the members of any community defined by religion or ethnicity, on churches and holy places, and on civilians by armed groups. We mourn the deaths of so many people in recent attacks. We express our concern for the many people and communities displaced by the violence. We pray that they may be assured of their security and religious freedom, so that they may return to their homes. We denounce those who seek to foster tensions, division, antagonism and bloodshed among the people of Ethiopia for their own political purposes.

We urge all parties to remember the extremity of suffering inflicted on the people of Ethiopia by conflict and division in the past. We appeal for a retreat from the precipice of a new catastrophe, and a return to dialogue rather than conflict, to cooperation rather than division. We call upon the TPLF leadership and the Ethiopian Federal Government to explore peaceful ways of settling the conflict and disputes between them, to avoid a wider and more destructive conflict, and to observe their shared responsibility for protecting civilians.

The executive committee conveys the WCC's support and encouragement to all the churches of Ethiopia to raise their prophetic voice for inclusive dialogue, peace, justice and unity against violence and hatred.

We acknowledge and express our profound appreciation for the continued inter-religious relations and cooperation between the Christian and Muslim leadership at the national level, and for their efforts for inter-communal peace and social cohesion.

The executive committee notes that the current acute crisis arises against the background of multiple concurrent challenges, including regional tensions associated with the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the worst locust invasion in 25 years, serious impacts on food production, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a constellation of crises underscores the necessity of cooperation at this critical time. We convey our Christian solidarity to the churches and people of Ethiopia and the region as they face these challenges and the impacts on their communities, for the present and the future. We support any initiatives of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), in cooperation with the local churches, for peaceful solutions.

We reaffirm the WCC's commitment to supporting dialogue and cooperation between the churches and religious communities of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the interests of developing peaceful relations in the region, we welcome the renewed relationships between the churches of these two countries, and we pray that security and public health conditions will soon improve so that their cooperation and joint initiatives can continue to grow, for the benefit of the people of the whole region.